



A Roadmap for Scaling Up Technology Adoption



Gina van Schalkwyk

The Technology Platform aims to stimulate greater uptake of new technologies by farmers.

Research and innovation – and the game-changing technologies they help foster – have always been a cornerstone of Feed the Future and are at the heart of the U.S. Government's vision for ending hunger. Harnessing scientific innovation and technology in agriculture and nutrition is critical to meeting the global challenges of producing more food with less land and water, reducing stunting in children and helping farmers adapt to climate change.

And our efforts don't stop at supporting research and giving the scientific community the resources and tools needed to develop truly innovative solutions to hunger. Any new technology is only as good as our ability to get it into the hands of the millions of smallholder farmers who are the foundation of agriculture-based economic growth.

The New Alliance is working to systematically meet these dual challenges – fostering innovation and bringing it to scale – through a new Technology Platform, a phased plan to identify the best available technologies that can improve the lives of smallholder farmers, the biggest obstacles to accessing and using these technologies, and the most strategic way forward to accelerate their adoption on a wide scale.

The Technology Platform is firmly grounded in Feed the Future's principles of partnership and country ownership. The G8 is supporting country-led efforts to determine 10-year targets for sustainably improving crop yields and livestock production, and to drive adoption of improved technologies in the six New Alliance countries.

In those countries where the United States is the lead G8 partner (Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique), the first phase of the Technology Platform was recently completed. Partners from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa developed a model for synthesizing data that will help countries assess the potential impacts of new technologies on yields, income, nutrition and the environment. This model and other resources will be evaluated by technology working groups from the countries themselves at workshops beginning in June 2013, and will be used to develop recommendations on agricultural technology priorities that are aligned with country investment plans.

The second phase of the Technology Platform will focus on developing an online virtual forum for accelerating technology adoption. In this forum, countries will be able to access and share information about research, available technologies, and other data and tools that are relevant to agricultural research, technology dissemination and commercialization efforts throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

Ultimately, the Platform aims to help smallholder farmers and agribusinesses easily access critical information about technologies like drought- and disease-resistant seeds, or fertilizer and crop management recommendations that are tailored to a farmer's geographic location, and will give technology users an opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences

with different technology solutions.

The Technology Platform also goes hand in hand with other components of the New Alliance. For instance, the [Scaling Seeds and Other Technologies Partnership](#) that will be housed at the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) will strengthen the seed sector and promote the commercialization, distribution and adoption of improved seed varieties and other technologies prioritized by the Platform's roadmap. In addition, the new [ICT Extension Challenge Fund](#) will focus on increasing adoption rates for priority technologies by harnessing social marketing techniques and proven ICT-enabled extension services such as mobile phone applications, low-cost video, and radio to reach farmers with critical training, weather and price information, and allow them to provide feedback.

All three New Alliance components complement Feed the Future's continued and deepening engagement with partners across sectors to identify and scale up promising agricultural technologies, most recently through the release of a [technology inventory](#) that provides U.S. Government staff and collaborating partners with a technical evidence base to inform their efforts to deliver appropriate technologies to greater numbers of smallholder farmers.

Want to learn more? [Read the press release](#) from the recent Chicago Council Symposium, where USAID Administrator Shah outlined Feed the Future's efforts to scale up impact through technology and innovation, or check out the new [Scalable Agricultural Technologies Inventory](#)!